

EXTRACTS FROM "A DICTIONARY OF SYMBOLICAL  
MASONRY, INCLUDING THE ROYAL ARCH DEGREE,"  
BY THE REV. G. OLIVER, D. D.

ACHILLES.—Perhaps some worthy people may stare when we point out Achilles as a Freemason. What! we hear them exclaim, is it possible that that fierce and ferocious man-slayer, nay, man-eater at heart, for he exhibited a strong propensity to cannibalism in longing to have devoured the dead body of Hector—is it possible that he could have been one of our philanthropic society? Yes, we reply, such is the actual fact, and Bonaparte was one, too, in the highest degree. But, if you will not believe Homer, or us, believe your own eyes, if, indeed, you are a Mason. *Ecce signum!* Behold Achilles giving Priam THE HAND, when the latter is supplicating for the body of his slain son:

"Thus having spoken, the old man's *right hand at the wrist*  
*He grasped*, that he might not in any respect be alarmed in mind."

Such is the Masonic and literal translation of the text by that illustrious Grecian and brother, Christopher North; and who will say, now, that Achilles was not a Mason?—*Freemasons' Quarterly Review*.

[According to this, *Brother Achilles* gave *Brother Priam* the Master Mason's Grip, but there is no evidence to show whether they used the word MAH-HAH-BONE, and the Five Points of Fellowship.]

ESSENTIAL SECRETS.—The essential secrets of Masonry consist of nothing more than the signs, grips, pass-words, and tokens, essential to the preservation of the society from the inroads of impostors; together with certain symbolical emblems, the technical terms appertaining to which served as a sort of universal language, by which the members of the fraternity could distinguish each other, in all places and countries where Lodges were instituted.—*Stone*.

EYESIGHT.—He who has been temporarily deprived of his sight is reduced to the condition of a new-born babe, or of one of those unfortunate individuals whose natural infirmity renders the presence of a conductor indispensably necessary; but when there are no outward objects to distract his attention, it is then that with the eye of reflection he probes into the deepest and

darkest recesses of his own heart, and discovers his natural imperfections and impurities much more readily than he could possibly have done had he not been deprived of his sight. This short deprivation of sight has kindled in his heart a spark of the brightest and purest flame. . . . We must further admit, that those who have been deprived of their sight, and who have hopes of being restored to it, strive most industriously and diligently to obtain it; that they have no greater desire, and that *they will most readily pledge themselves to do all that can be required of them*, in order to obtain that inestimable blessing.

A man who has been deprived of his sight may be introduced into places where he is surrounded by the strangest and the rarest objects, *without a possibility of his becoming a traitor*. At the same time, those who are in possession of their sight cannot feel the care of their guides so much as those who are hoodwinked, and who feel that without the constant attention of their conductors they would be much more helpless than they now are; but, however many proofs of attention and care they may receive, there is still something left to wish for; and to the question, What is your chief desire? the answer will ever assuredly be, "Light." —*Gadricke*.

**FIVE POINTS OF FELLOWSHIP.**—The five points of fellowship were thus illustrated in the lectures used by the Athol Masons of the last century:

1. When the necessities of a brother call for my support, I will be ever ready to lend him a helping hand to save him from sinking, if I find him worthy thereof.

2. Indolence shall not cause my footsteps to halt, nor wrath to turn them aside; but, forgetting every selfish consideration, I will be ever swift of foot to save, help, and execute benevolence to a fellow-creature in distress, but more particularly to a brother Mason.

3. When I offer up my ejaculations to Almighty God, I will remember my brother's welfare, even as my own; for as the voice of babes and sucklings ascends to the throne of grace, so, most assuredly, will the breathings of a fervent heart ascend to the mansions of bliss.

4. A brother's secret, delivered to me as such, I will keep as I would my own, because, if I betray the trust which has been reposed in me, I might do him an irreparable injury; it would be like the villany of an assassin, who lurks in darkness to stab his adversary when unarmed and least prepared to meet an enemy.

5. A brother's character I will support in his absence, as I would

in his presence. I will not revile him myself, nor suffer it to be done by others, if it is in my power to prevent it.

Thus, by the five points of fellowship, we are linked together in one indivisible chain of sincere affection, brotherly love, relief, and truth.

GUTTERAL.—The gutteral sign alludes to temperance, which demands such a cautious habit of restraint, as may be necessary to preserve us from the risk of violating our obligation and *incurring its penalty*.—*Hemming*.

[This alludes to the "Duegard of an Entered Apprentice."]

LANDMARKS.—What are the landmarks? is a question often asked, but never determinately answered. In ancient times, boundary-stones were used as landmarks, before title-deeds were known, the removal of which was strictly forbidden by law. With respect to the landmarks of Masonry, some restrict them to the O. B. signs, tokens, and words. Others include the ceremonies of initiation, passing, and raising; and the form, dimensions, and support; the ground, situation, and covering; the ornaments, furniture, and jewels of a Lodge, or their characteristic symbols. Some think that the Order has no landmarks beyond its peculiar secrets. It is quite clear, however, that the order against removing or altering the landmarks was universally observed in all ages of the Craft.

METAL.—Many men dote on the metals silver and gold with their whole souls, and know no other standard whereby to estimate their own worth, or the worth of their fellow-beings, but by the quantity of these metals they possess, thereby debasing and degrading those qualities of the mind or spirit by which alone mankind ought to be estimated. He who wishes to be initiated into Free Masonry must be willing to relinquish all descriptions of metal, and all the adventitious circumstances of rank and fortune, for it is the MAN that is received into Free Masonry, and not his rank or riches.—*Gadicke*.

ORIGINAL POINTS.—Ancient Masonry admitted twelve original points, which constitute the basis of the entire system, and without which no person ever did or can be legally received into the Order. Every candidate is obliged to pass through all these essential forms and ceremonies, otherwise his initiation would not be legal. They are—opening; preparing, reporting, entering, prayer, circumambulation, advancing, obligation, intrusted, invested, placed, closing.

**PENAL.**—The penal sign marks our obligation, and reminds us also of the fall of Adam, and the dreadful penalty entailed thereby on his sinful posterity, being no less than death. It intimates that the stiff neck of the disobedient shall be cut off from the land of the living by the judgment of God, even as the head is severed from the body by the sword of human justice.

[This applies as well to the Entered Apprentice's as to the Royal Arch Mason's "Duegard."]

**PHRASES OF ADMISSION.**—When a candidate receives the first Degree he is said to be *initiated*, at the second step he is *passed*, at the third, *raised*; when he takes the Mark Degree, he is *congratulated* (advanced); having passed the chair, he is said to have *presided*; when he becomes a Most Excellent Master, he is *acknowledged* and *received*; and when a Royal Arch Mason, he is *exalted*.

**SIGN OF DISTRESS.**—In a society whose members ought fraternally to love and assist each other, it is to be expected that they should have a sign whereby they could make themselves known immediately to their brethren, in however distressed circumstances they might be placed, and thereby at the same time claim their assistance and protection. This is the sign of distress, in conjunction with a few words. He who falls into the greatest difficulty and danger, and supposes that there is a brother within sight or hearing, let him use this sign, and a true and faithful brother must spring to his assistance.—*Gadicke*.

**UNIFORMITY.**—It is almost unnecessary to argue the question in relation to Uniformity of Work, because such can never be; we say never, as long as we live up to the teachings of the Fathers and communicate, *orally*, the mysteries to candidates. To obtain uniformity, the work must be written, and that will never be done, so long as Freemasons regard their obligations. A Gen. G. Lodge should be, if the fraternity, at any time foolish enough to sanction such an organization, which they never will, might, in imitation of such bodies among modern associations, attempt for the sake of having uniformity, by its dicta authorize the work to be written, but under no other circumstances could or would such a thing be attempted; and even in that case there would be a general uprising of the craft to prevent such a violation of obligation. Uniformity in all things is not absolutely necessary, nor was it ever so considered. It cannot be expected that different persons will communicate the same ideas in precisely the same language; besides language changes in its import and ideas change with the

progress of science and advance of philosophy. It was well enough for the ancients to advance that the sun rises in the East, that this earth is stationary as a tree or a house is stationary, and that the sun moves around this little globe of ours; but the day of these ideas is past. Now, by a change of verbiage, the ideas are expressed consistent with sound philosophical principles, as the sun in the east opens and adorns the day, etc., and thus it must necessarily be in relation to Masonic language and Masonic ideas. The language used to express an idea several thousand years ago, or even a few hundred years ago, would be unintelligible, and not understood. To expect uniformity of language for all time, is a vain expectation, and can never be attained.—*Key Stone*.<sup>1</sup>

**VAULT.**—Vaults are found in every country of the world as well as in Judea, and were used for secret purposes. Thus Stephens, speaking of some ruins in Yucatan, says: "The only way of descending was to tie a rope around the body, and be lowered by the Indians. In this way I was let down, and almost before my head had passed through the hole, my feet touched the top of a heap of rubbish, high directly under the hole, and falling off at the sides. Clambering down it, I found myself in a round chamber, so filled with rubbish that I could not stand upright. With a candle in my hand, I crawled all round on my hands and knees. The chamber was in the shape of a dome, and had been coated with plaster, most of which had fallen, and now encumbered the ground. The depth could not be ascertained without clearing out the interior."

**WAGES.**—The tradition respecting the payment of the workmen's wages at the building of Solomon's Temple, may or may not be accurate, as I am ignorant of the authority on which the calculations are founded. Indeed the probability is, that the tradition has been fabricated in a subsequent age, without the existence of any documents to attest its authenticity.

<sup>1</sup> This is not taken from Dr. Oliver's Dictionary, but is quoted from a popular Masonic journal, and embodies the sentiments of a great majority of the fraternity.



THE TRIPLE TAU

## APPENDIX

NOTE A, page 12.—In some Lodges the Tyler *takes* the sword from the altar.

NOTE B, page 18.—Some Masters repeat the words, "O Lord my God," three times.

NOTE C, page 19.—Masters differ about the proper manner of placing the three lights around the altar. In most Lodges they are placed as represented in the engraving, page 19; but many Masters have them placed thus:



The square represents the altar; the figures 1, 2, and 3, the lights; the letter A, the kneeling candidate, and the letter B, the Master.

NOTE D, page 21.—Some Masters say: "I now declare this Lodge opened in the Third Degree of Masonry *for the dispatch of business*."

NOTE E, page 39.—In spelling this word, "Boaz," always begin with the letter "A," and follow the alphabet down as the letters occur in the word.

NOTE F, page 42.—In some Lodges the reply is: "Try me, and disapprove of me if you can;" in others, "I am willing to be tried."

NOTE G, page 43.—Some say, "In an anteroom adjacent to a Lodge of Entered Apprentice Masons."

NOTE H, page 44.—Some say, "Three times around the Lodge."

NOTE I, page 51.—Some say, "On the highest hills and lowest valleys."

NOTE J, page 89.—In some Lodges, the Deacon omits the single rap (●), and opens the door when the three raps (●●●) are given.

NOTE K, page 205.—In most Lodges the candidate does not halt at the Junior Warden's station, but passes on to the Senior Warden.

NOTE L, page 125.—Master says: "I shall now proceed to give and explain to you the several signs and tokens belonging to the Degree." Here the Master places his hands as the candi-

date's were when he took the oath of a Master (see Fig. 5, page 17), and explains. Makes sign of a Master Mason, and explains. (See Fig. 6, page 18.) Makes the grand hailing sign, and explains. (See Fig. 7, page 18.) Gives grip of a Master Mason, and explains. (See Fig. 16, page 97.) Gives strong grip, and explains. (See Fig. 17, page 120.)

NOTE M, page 235.—The Principal Sojourner should say: "We are of your own brethren and kin—children of the captivity—descendants of those noble Giblemites, we were received and acknowledged Most Excellent Masters at the completion and dedication of the first temple—were present at the destruction of that temple by Nebuchadnezzar, by whom we were carried captives to Babylon, where we remained servants to him and his successors until the reign of Cyrus, King of Persia, by whose order we have been liberated, and have now come up to help, aid, and assist in rebuilding the house of the Lord, without the hope of fee or reward." (See lecture.)

NOTE N, page 236.—Instead of saying: "You surely could not have come thus far unless you were three Most Excellent Masters," etc., the Master of the First Veil should say: "Good men and true you must have been, to have come thus far to promote so noble and good an undertaking, but further you cannot go without my word, sign, and word of explanation." (See lecture.)

NOTE O, page 235.—In some Chapters they only stamp seven times.

NOTE P, page 140.—In some parts of the country the second section of the lecture is continued as follows:

Q. What followed?

A. They travelled as before; and as those, who had pursued a due westerly course from the temple, were returning, one (1) of them, being more weary than the rest, sat down on the brow of a hill to rest and refresh himself, and on rising up caught hold of a sprig of acacia, which easily giving way excited his curiosity; and while they were meditating over this singular circumstance they heard three frightful exclamations from the cleft of an adjacent rock. The first was the voice of Jubelo, exclaiming, "Oh! that my throat had been cut from ear to ear, my tongue torn out by its roots and buried in the sands of the sea at low water mark, where the tide ebbs and flows twice in twenty-four hours, ere I had been accessory to the death of so great and good a man as our Grand Master Hiram Abiff." The second was the voice of Jubela, exclaiming: "Oh! that my left breast had been torn open, my heart plucked from thence and given to the beasts of the field and the birds of the air as a prey, ere I

had been accessory to the death of so great and good a man as our Grand Master Hiram Abiff." The third was the voice of Jubelum, exclaiming more horridly than the rest, "It was I that gave him the fatal blow! it was I that slew him! oh! that my body had been severed in twain, my bowels taken from thence and burnt to ashes, the ashes scattered before the four (4) winds of heavens, that no more resemblance might be had, among men or masons, of so vile a wretch as I am, ere I had been accessory to the death of so great and good a man as our Grand Master Hiram Abiff." Upon which, they rushed in, seized, bound, and brought them before King Solomon, who ordered them to be taken without the gates of the city and executed according to their imprecations. They were accordingly put to death.

*Q.* What followed?

*A.* King Solomon ordered the twelve fellow crafts to go in search of the body, and if found, to observe whether the master's word, or a key to it, was on or about it.

*Q.* Where was the body of our Grand Master Hiram Abiff found?

*A.* A due westerly course from the temple, on the brow of the hill, where our weary brother sat down to rest and refresh himself.

*Q.* Was the master's word, or a key to it, on or about it?

*A.* It was not.

*Q.* What followed?

*A.* King Solomon then ordered them to go with him to endeavor to raise the body, and ordered that as the master's word was then lost, that the first sign given at the grave, and the first word spoken after the body should be raised, should be adopted for the regulation of all Master Masons' Lodges until future ages should find out the right.

*Q.* What followed?

*A.* They returned to the grave, when King Solomon ordered them to take the body by the entered-apprentice grip and see if it could be raised; but on taking the body so it was putrid, it having been dead fifteen days, the skin slipped from the flesh, and it could not be raised.

*Q.* What followed?

*A.* King Solomon then ordered them to take it by the fellow-craft grip and see if it could be so raised; but on taking the body by that grip the flesh cleft from the bone, and it could not be so raised.

*Q.* What followed?

*A.* King Solomon then took it by the strong grip of a Master Mason, or lion's paw, and raised it on the five (5) points of fellow-



ship, which are foot to foot, knee to knee, breast to breast, hand to back, cheek to cheek, or mouth to ear. Foot to foot, that we will never hesitate to go on foot, and out of our way, to assist a suffering and needy brother; knee to knee, that we will ever remember a brother's welfare in all our adorations to Deity; breast to breast, that we will ever keep in our own breasts a brother's secrets, when communicated to us as such, murder and treason excepted; hand to back, that we will ever be ready to stretch forth our hand to aid and support a fallen brother; cheek to cheek, or mouth to ear, that we will ever whisper good counsel in the ear of a brother, and in the most tender manner remind him of his faults, and endeavor to aid his reformation, and will give him due and timely notice that he may ward off all approaching danger.

Q. What did they do with the body?

A. They carried it to the temple and buried it in due form. And masonic tradition informs us that there was a marble column erected to his memory, upon which was delineated a beautiful virgin weeping; before her lay a book open, in her right hand a sprig of acacia, in her left an urn, and behind her stood Time with his fingers unfolding the ringlets of her hair.

Q. What do these hieroglyphical figures denote?

A. The broken column denotes the untimely death of our Grand Master Hiram Abiff; the beautiful virgin weeping, the temple unfinished; the book open before her, that his virtues lie on perpetual record; the sprig of acacia in her right hand, the timely discovery of his body; the urn in her left, that his ashes were then safely deposited to perpetuate the remembrance of so distinguished a character; Time unfolding the ringlets of her hair, that time, patience, and perseverance accomplish all things.

Q. Have you a sign belonging to this Degree?

A. I have several.

Q. Give me a sign? (Penalty.)

Q. What is that called?

A. The duegard of a Master Mason.

Q. Has that an allusion?

A. It has, to the penalty of my obligation, and when our ancient brethren returned to the grave of our Grand Master Hiram Abiff, they found their hands placed in this position to guard their nostrils from the disagreeable effluvia that arose there from the grave.

Q. Give me a token. (Pass grip.)

Q. What is that called?

A. The pass grip from a fellow craft to a Master Mason.

Q. What is its name?

A. Tubal Cain.

Q. Who was Tubal Cain?

A. The first known artificer or cunning worker in metals.

Q. Pass that? (Strong grip.)

Q. What is that?

A. The strong grip of a Master Mason, or lion's paw.

Q. Has it a name?

A. It has.

Q. Give it me?

A. I cannot, nor can it be given except on the five (5) points of fellowship, and heard then in a low breath.

Q. Advance and give it.

A. The word is right.

Q. How many grand masonic pillars are there?

A. Three.

Q. What are they called?

A. Wisdom, Strength and Beauty.

Q. Why are they so called?

A. Because it is necessary there should be wisdom to contrive, strength to support, and beauty to adorn, all great and important undertakings.

Q. By whom are they represented?

A. By Solomon, King of Israel, Hiram, King of Tyre, and Hiram Abiff, who were our first three Most Excellent Grand Masters.

Q. Why are they said to represent them?

A. Solomon, King of Israel, represents the pillars of wisdom, because by his wisdom he contrived the superb model of excellence that immortalized his name; Hiram, King of Tyre, represents the pillar of strength, because he supported King Solomon in this great and important undertaking; Hiram Abiff represents the pillar of beauty, because by his cunning workmanship, the temple was beautified and adorned.

Q. What supported the temple?

A. It was supported by 1453 columns and 2906 pilasters, all hewn from the finest Parian marble.

Q. How many were employed in building the temple?

A. Three Grand Masters, three thousand three hundred masters, or overseers of the work, eighty thousand fellow crafts in the mountains and in the quarries, and seventy (70) thousand entered apprentices, or bearers of burdens. All these were classed and arranged in such a manner by the wisdom of King Solomon, that neither envy, discord, nor confusion was suffered to interrupt that universal peace and tranquillity which pervaded the world at this important period.

*Q.* What is meant by the three steps usually delineated on the Master's carpet?

*A.* They are emblematical of the three principal stages of human life, viz.: youth, manhood, and age, etc., etc. (Monitorial.)

*Q.* How many classes of Master's emblems are there?

*A.* Nine.

*Q.* What is the ninth (9th)?

*A.* The setting maul, spade, coffin, and sprig of acacia. The setting maul was that by which our Grand Master Hiram Abiff was slain; the spade was that which dug his grave; the coffin was that which received his remains, and the sprig of acacia was that which bloomed at the head of his grave. These are all striking emblems of morality, and afford serious reflections to a thinking mind; but they would be still more repining were it not for the sprig of acacia that bloomed at the head of the grave, which serves to remind us of that imperishable part of man which survives the grave and bears the nearest affinity to the Supreme Intelligence which pervades all nature, and which can never, never, never die. Then, finally, my brethren, let us imitate our Grand Master Hiram Abiff in his virtuous conduct, his unfeigned piety to his God, and his inflexible fidelity to his trust, that like him we may welcome the grim tyrant Death, and receive him as a kind messenger, sent by our Supreme Grand Master to translate us from this imperfect to that all perfect, glorious, and celestial lodge above, where the Supreme Architect of the universe presides.

NOTE *Q.*, page 148. — (*Extract from the Annual Address of M. W. P. M. Tucker, G. M. of Vermont.*)

In my address of last year I endeavored to condense what little information I had about the Masonic lectures, and that attempt has been, in general, quite favorably noticed by the Craft. In one distinguished Masonic quarter, however, some parts of my address on this subject seem to have met with marked disfavor. One particular thing found fault with is, that I thought myself justified in saying that the lectures in use, received through Webb and Gleason, were the *true* lectures of Preston. I certainly did not mean to say that they were identical in *length* with those of Preston. I had already said that Webb changed the arrangement of Preston's sections, but that he had left the body of the lectures as Preston had established them. Perhaps I should have said, the *substance* instead of the "*body*" of those lectures. I now state, what I supposed was well understood before by every tolerably well-informed Mason in the United States, that Webb *abridged* as well as *changed the ar-*

*rangement* of the lectures of Preston. I believed that I knew *then*, and I believe I know *now*, that Webb learned and taught the Preston lectures *in full*, as well as that he prepared and taught his own abridgment of them. I have a copy in key, both of Webb's abridgment and of Preston in full, which I have reasons, wholly satisfactory to myself, for believing are true manuscripts of both those sets of lectures, as Gleason taught them. But my reviewer has got the "very rare" book of a certain J. Browne, published in London in 1802, called the "Master Key," containing the *whole* course of lectures in an "abstruse cypher," and *presumes* them to be the Prestonian lectures. Reviewers, it seems, tolerate "presumption" in themselves, while nothing short of demonstration is allowable with them as to others, who are required to speak from "their own knowledge." I am ready to compare my copy of the Preston lectures in *full* with J Browne's "*Master Key*," if my reviewer understands Browne's "abstruse cypher,"—a fact about which he has not yet informed us. Again, I am criticized for saying that Gleason visited England and exemplified the Preston lectures, as he had received them from Webb, before the Grand Lodge of England, whose authorities pronounced them correct, and I am charged with taking this from "hearsay," and my critic places "no faith in it." I received that statement from the *highest* authority—from one who *knew*—and I wrote it down at the time. There are existing reasons why I do not choose to gratify my critic by naming that authority at this time, and I leave the Craft to judge whether my *statement* of that fact, upon undoubted authority, is not worthy of as much credit as *any* reviewer's *doubt* about it. I do not possess anything in writing or published of Gleason's, as to his lecturing before the *Grand Lodge* of England, but that Masonry abroad did not ignore the lectures, as Gleason taught them, we have his own published letter to prove. In the 2d edition of the Masonic Trestleboard, under the date of Nov. 26th, 1843, in a letter from him to Brother Charles W. Moore, I find the following language:

"It was my privilege, while at Brown University, Providence, R. I., (1801/2), to acquire a complete knowledge of the lectures, in the *three* first degrees of Masonry, *directly* from our much esteemed Brother T. S. Webb, author of the Free Mason's Monitor; and, in consequence, was appointed and commissioned by the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts and Maine, Grand Lecturer, devoting the whole time to the instruction of the Lodges under the jurisdiction,—and, for many years subsequently (as Professor of Astronomy and Geography), visiting all the different States in the Union, and (1829/30) many parts of Europe—successfully communicating, to numerous Lodges and Associations of Brethren, the same 'valuable lectures of the Craft,' according to the ancient landmarks."

Here, then, we have the assertion of Gleason himself, that the

lectures he received from Webb were, "in many parts of Europe," as well as in the States at home, communicated by him to "numerous Lodges and Associations of Brethren, according to the ancient landmarks," without the slightest hint or intimation of any objection being made to them abroad, as not being the true lectures of the Order. This is, at least, *prima facie* evidence of their having been substantially what I claimed them to be. But if I am still told that it carries no conclusive evidence that Brother Gleason knew anything of the *true* Preston lectures, I call that brother upon the stand again. On the 24th day of June, 1812, "Brother Benjamin Gleason, A. M.," delivered an "Oration" at "Montreal, Lower Canada," before St. Paul's Lodge No. 12, and Union Lodge No. 8, by "special request" of the former Lodge. It was published at Montreal, and a second edition of it was soon after published at Boston. I copy from this second edition the following remarks of Brother Gleason:

"On the subject of our Lectures, we notice with pleasure, this day, the venerable Preston of England, whose 'Illustrations of Masonry' redound to the honor of the Craft, and whose *estimable system of improvements*, while with precision and certainty they define, with purity and eloquence, aggrandize, the immovable *landmarks* of our ancient Society."

Brother Gleason then, *did*, upon his own statement, understand Preston's "estimable system of improvements," their "precision and certainty," their "purity and elegance," and their relation to our "immovable landmarks." And with these and Webb's teachings fully in his mind, was probably as good a judge as any modern critic, of the relations they bore to each other. Can any reasonable man, in this state of things, believe that if they had *conflicted* with each other he did not know it, or that, if conflicting, he would have taught *both*; or that he could have taught either "in Europe" without objection, had they not been substantially the *same* teachings, differing only in their *length*?

But my critic says:—"It is wrong to talk in this careless strain of the Prestonian lectures as existing in the United States, while in all probability they never did, and most certainly never will. It is time to quit writing Masonic history in this loose and random style."

It is no part of my purpose to *convince* my reviewer that the "Prestonian lectures" exist in the United States, or to *persuade* him, that (though confessedly a strong Masonic writer), he does not quite embody in his learning *all* the Masonry of this Western continent. His liberality might perhaps concede that, *among all* who have made Masonry a study, or with their *united* investigations, enough of Masonic learning *might* have been preserved to

make itself respected at least as against simple negation. But I do not write to *convince* or satisfy *him*. I do so that the Craft may have an opportunity to understand something of their own affairs, as they exist; to examine and investigate them as matters of fact and principle; and that they may have no apology for "pinning their faith" upon the mere negations of any writer, whatever may be the strength of his masonic reputation. In an account of the Installation of Mount Lebanon Lodge at Boston, on the 29th of December, 1858, Brother Charles W. Moore, Editor of the *Freemasons' Monthly Magazine*, has the following remarks: "Among the Past Masters of this Lodge we notice the name of the late Benjamin Gleason, Esq., who was the associate and co-laborer of the late Thomas Smith Webb, in introducing into the Lodges of New England, and subsequently into other sections of the country, what is known as the Prestonian system of work and lectures. The labor of promulgating the work mainly devolved on Brother Gleason, and it is not too much to say, that as an accurate, consistent, and intelligent teacher, he had no superior, if an equal, in this country. He was a thoroughly educated man, and he understood the literary as well as the mental requirements necessary to a faithful and creditable discharge of the important duty he had assumed. In 1804, the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts adopted the Preston ritual as its standard of work, and employed Brother Gleason to communicate it to the Lodges under its jurisdiction, then including what is now the State of Maine. In the performance of this duty, he was exclusively employed during the whole of the year named, on account of the Grand Lodge; and we think a large part of the following two or three years, on his own private account. Indeed he never ceased his labors, as a lecturer, until his death in 1847, and there are many brethren now living—among them myself—who will ever take pride in remembering and acknowledging him as their master and teacher, in the purest and most perfect Masonic ritual of ancient Craft Masonry ever practised in this country. It was the 'work' of Masonry, as revived by Preston, and approved and sanctioned by the Grand Lodge of England, near the close of the last century, and practised by authority of that body, until the 'union' in 1813, when, for the purpose of reconciliation, it was subjugated to a revision, which, in some respects, proved to be an unfortunate one, inasmuch as the revised system, though exceedingly beautiful, has so many incongruities and departures from the original, and is so elaborate withal, that it has never met with that cordial approval, even among our English brethren, which is necessary to its recognition and acceptance as a universal system. The verbal ritual, as re-

vised by Preston, was brought to this country about the year 1803—not by Webb, as we have seen it stated, for he never went abroad—but by two English brethren, one of whom, we think, had been a pupil of Preston, and both of whom had been members of one of the principal Lodges of Instruction in London. It was first communicated to Webb, and by him imparted to Gleason, who was at the time a student in Brown University, at Providence, and being an intelligent and zealous brother, became a favorite of Webb, who was his senior both in years and in Masonry. On being submitted to the Grand Lodge of this Commonwealth it was approved and adopted, and Brother Gleason was employed to impart it to the Lodges, as before stated. From that time to the present it has been the only recognized Masonic work of Massachusetts, and though we are not unmindful that many unwarrantable liberties have been taken with it, and that innovations have crept in, which would have been better out—yet, as a whole, we are happy to know that it has been preserved in the Lodges of this city—and in view of the recent instructions, by authority of the Grand Lodge, we may add, the Lodges of this Commonwealth—in a remarkable degree of purity; and that it is still taught in the Lodge of which, in 1809, Brother Gleason was Master, with so close a resemblance to the original, that if it were possible for him to be present at the conferring of the degrees to-day, he would find very little to object to in the work of his successors. The system underwent some modifications (which were doubtless improvements) in its general arrangement and adaptation—its mechanism—soon after its introduction into this country; but in all other respects it was received, and has been preserved, especially in the Lodges of the older jurisdictions, essentially, as it came from the original source of all our Craft Masonry. In many parts of the country it has hitherto had to contend against the corrupting influences of ignorant itinerant lecturers and spurious publications; but it is believed that an effectual check has been put to this class of dangerous evils, and that they will hereafter be treated as they deserve. If so, we may reasonably hope to be able to preserve the ritual, and transmit it to our successors, in something like its original purity, but not otherwise.” We have, then, added to Gleason’s own assertion as to his knowledge of Preston’s “estimable system of improvements,” the statement of one of the most intelligent and reliable Masons in this country, that Webb had “the Prestonian system of work and lectures,” and that the labor of promulgating them “mainly devolved on Brother Gleason.” And I wholly content to let that evidence stand as my authority and justification against the remarks of a reviewer who accuses

me of "talking in a careless strain" when I maintain that these lectures exist in the United States.

Our Grand Lecturer has compared, with critical care, my copy of the Preston with that of the Gleason Lectures. I have not had sufficient leisure since the former has been in my possession, to compare them, as fully as I design to do hereafter. The Preston Lectures are very lengthy, and if written out in full the Grand Lecturer thinks they would cover nearly one hundred pages of foolscap paper. He thinks them wholly too long for ordinary use, and that if all Masons were required to commit them *in extenso*, it would be a task which very few would successfully accomplish; and so far as my own examination has gone, I entertain the same opinion. The Grand Lecturer also entertains the opinion that Webb has preserved, in the abridgment and new arrangement of them, all that was substantially of practical value, and that the language used by him is preferable to much that was used by Preston.

I regret to say that in the criticism of which I have spoken, there appears a most palpable intention to undervalue *all* the lectures of Masonry. The believers in the importance of preserving the lectures intact are sneered at; called "parrot Masons," who, taken off the "beaten path," know "nothing at all of Masonry, of its history, its philosophy, or its symbolism." And we are dismissed with the cool remark—"Let us talk more, therefore, of the philosophy of Masonry, and something less of the Lectures of Webb," and as opposed to the idea of the importance of the Lectures, we are called on, "in Heaven's name, to inaugurate a new era."

This is, at least, sufficiently cool for a teacher of Freemasonry. "Inaugurate a *new* era." That is the idea precisely. Some of us ignorant Masons had supposed that, at least, some portion of our Masonic "history, philosophy, and symbolism," was *suggested* in our Lectures. Our "history"—written and unwritten—the "philosophy" of our system, and something of our "symbolism," were imagined to be secure in the past. But a "new era." About what? Can our "*history*" be changed; can our "*philosophy*" be changed? Not a million of critics, however distinguished, can brush the first particle of consecrated dust from either. "There they stand, and there they will stand forever—unshaken by the tests of human scrutiny, of talents and of time."